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ABSTRACT

The program development guide describes the Fairfax County (Virginia) Noncategorical Early Childhood Program (NECP) which serves approximately 75 mildly and moderately handicapped children from 2 to 8 years of age with either a preschool home resource program, a class based preschool program, or a class based primary program. The guide is designed to provide information about the NECP model and its use of the noncategorical concept, mainstreaming, educational teaming, and a parent program. Separate sections describe the child services and curriculum, the mainstreaming progression, the feeder curriculum (which serves as a transition from special to general education), teaming, the parent program, and evaluation methods and results. Among evaluation results were that preschool and primary students showed greater than expected progress in all skill areas, that parents' perceptions of their children's progress was highly positive, and that parents felt that the NECP program provided much needed emotional support as well as increased knowledge and skills. Detailed evaluation tables are included. Sources of additional program information are listed. (DB)

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NONCATEGORICAL EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM FOR HANDICAPPED CHILDREN

(NECP)

A Model and Demonstration Project

Grant Number G-007701386

Clay Sande, Project Director
Irene Nassor, Project Development Coordinator

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Clay Sande
Project Director

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction 3

Child Services - Curriculum. 7

Mainstreaming. 33

Feeder Curriculum. 55

Teaming. 65

Parent Program 77

Evaluation 89

Additional Information 113

INTRODUCTION

Michael is a bright and inquisitive six-year-old with a halo of blonde curls. Like most six-year-olds he is interested in animals and sports and not interested in girls. But Michael is different from most children. He has a severe speech and language problem that has made it difficult to communicate.

Mrs. Johnson first noticed that her young son, John, was slower than most children when he was only a few months old. He sat up later than her first two children and showed no interest in walking until well past his first birthday. By the time John was three, Mrs. Johnson was desperate for help and advice.

Gina's problems were obvious from birth. Her limbs were contorted and she showed evidence of moderate brain damage. Because of early intervention, Gina, at age four, had become a sociable, responsive child with a ready smile for strangers.

Michael, John, and Gina have very different disabilities and yet each have been served and helped during the three year history of the Fairfax County Noncategorical Early Childhood Program (NECP). Begun in 1977, the NECP is a model program established to develop a comprehensive educational program for young handicapped children.

The NECP demonstrates a model of full and appropriate educational services in Fairfax County for young, handicapped children two through eight years of age by presenting a program based on a student's strengths and weaknesses without regard to their particular handicap. The NECP serves children with mild to moderate handicaps, especially children in that range who typically are difficult to place in the public school system.

The NECP by serving a varied population in the immediate locality is able to minimize program costs. Federal law requires a specific category of handicapping conditions prior to a child's placement in special education, however, the focus of the NECP is on the specific needs of individual children rather than on stereotypic labels. Normal developmental models are available and a wide range of resource services are offered to the children in the program.

NECP has three components:

1. A Preschool Home-Resource Program - *John (and Mrs. Johnson) were helped through the home resource program. A preschool home resource teacher provided direct and consultative services to the Johnson family, bringing John to the class-based preschool for special activities.*

2. A Class-Based Preschool Program - *Gina was placed in a preschool class where she was taught with other children of similar functional ability, but not necessarily similar handicaps. In addition, she is helped by a resource team which aid in dealing with her particular neurological and physical handicaps.*

3. A Class-Based Primary Program - *Michael is in a primary class with children of similar academic functioning ability. With the help of his teacher and resource specialists, especially the speech and language therapist, Micahel will be mainstreamed into a regular second grade class.*

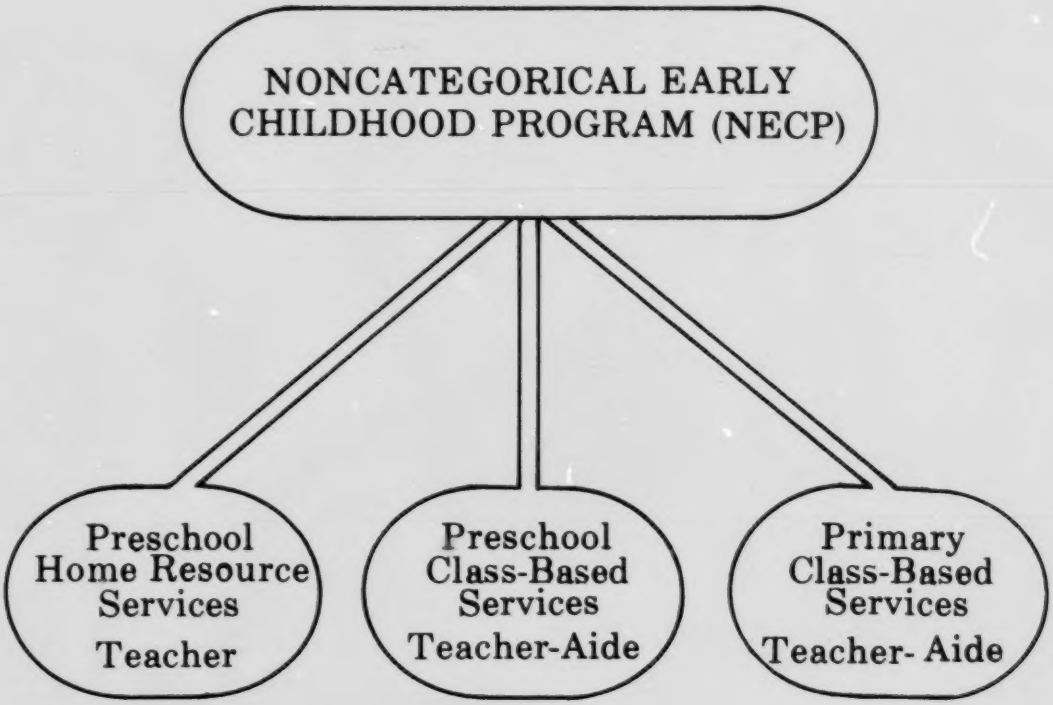
All three NECP components are noncategorical in nature and currently serve a population of approximately seventy-five children. The Noncategorical Early Childhood Program is sponsored jointly by Fairfax County Public Schools, Fairfax, Virginia, and the Bureau for the Education of the Handicapped, U.S. Department of Education.

A primary objective of this program has been to unite the general education and the special education programs. The children in both programs can benefit from a wider range of resource services, materials, and positive peer models. Integration is accomplished by mainstreaming based on a prescribed set of procedures, teaming of both special education and general education staff, and through an organization of a cooperative parent-teacher program.

This program development guide is designed to provide information about the NECP model and its use of the noncategorical concept, mainstreaming, educational teaming, and a parent program. In terms of replication for other school districts, not every aspect of the program need be copied nor does a full complement of staff and resource people have to be available. Selected components of the program may be replicated in isolation.

During the three years of its existence the Fairfax County Noncategorical Early Childhood Program has been an exciting model project, presenting new ideas for delivery of services to handicapped children of Fairfax County.

CHILD SERVICES/ CURRICULUM


NONCATEGORICAL EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM (NECP)
Preschool Home Resource Services
Teacher
Preschool Class-Based Services
Teacher-Aide
Primary Class-Based Services
Teacher- Aide

PRESCHOOL CURRICULUM

The preschool class-based and home resource program uses an assessment/curriculum tool to help the teacher determine where to begin the educational program for the child. The criterion referenced, developmentally sequenced assessment/curriculum pinpoints a functioning level for each child in the areas of fine-motor, gross-motor, language, cognitive, self-help, and social-emotional skill development.

The assessment tool is intended to provide the teacher and/or parent with information which determines the most appropriate goals and objectives for a child. This information is used to develop the child's Individual Education Plan (IEP). An IEP can be revised on the basis of a child's competencies and emerging abilities.

Skills in which the child is having difficulty are targeted. Short-term instructional objectives are written, based upon an analysis of the long-term targeted skills. The methods and materials used to achieve these objectives are determined by the child's learning ability.

In the preschool class-based program, children functioning at a similar level are grouped together for language, cognitive, and motor activities. The areas of fine-motor, social, and self-help skills are taught to a heterogeneous group of children. Individual instruction is provided for those children unable to function in a group setting. The curriculum for preschool can best be understood by looking at a sample day of the home resource teacher and sample activities conducted in the class-based program.

PRESCHOOL HOME RESOURCE SERVICES

The preschool home resource teacher provides direct and consultative services to children with mild to moderate handicaps, ages two through four, and their families. The responsibilities of the preschool home resource teacher include:

- direct therapy services,
- assessment of the developmental goals of the students and development of the IEPs (Individual Education Plan) to meet these goals,
- training to enable parents and/or child-care workers to reinforce activities and objectives and to keep evaluative data on children's progress,
- consultative services to families or child-care centers,
- workshops and training sessions for nursery, day-care, and Head Start personnel and parents,
- integration of home-based children into the class-based preschool program,
- assistance in locating child-care facilities for children in center-based program.

The home resource teacher is a member of the preschool team. This integration provides for continuity between the NECP preschool class-base and primary programs.

PRESCHOOL HOME RESOURCE TEACHER'S ACTIVITIES

The example below shows the many types of activities and responsibilities of the preschool home resource teacher. Time for planning, updating records, and participating in countywide inservices is also incorporated into the schedule. The services can be illustrated by looking at a typical day.

- *Attends the preschool weekly staff meeting to discuss home resource children who might be brought to school for a segment of the day for language and/or social experiences. Also contributes to staff discussion regarding other children in class-based program and preschool goals.*

- *Telephones several parents to confirm home visits, checks the progress of follow-up activities, and makes appointments for testing and screening as part of child-find activities.*

- *Visits the Johnson home to discuss the progress being made with behavior modification techniques that are being used by the parents with John. (Example cited earlier)*

- *Goes to John's nursery school to work with John and demonstrate some gross-motor and fine-motor activities for the teachers. Also consults with the teachers about the student's progress. Nursery school requests a workshop inservice for the following month. Plans to be discussed later in the week.*

- *Returns to school to meet with a parent and child who will be attending the preschool class-based program for additional language and social experiences. The home resource teacher will work with other children in this class during this time to maintain the student/teacher ratio.*

- *Eats lunch*

- *Meets with a parent to write an Individual Education Plan for a new resource student. Sets a schedule for home visits.*

- *Telephones PTO program coordinator regarding a guest speaker for the next meeting.*

- *Arranges a parent workshop for parents of preschool resource and class-based students.*

- *Makes last home visit of the day to work directly with a child who has a speech and language handicap. Provides parents with written instructions for assisting their child in the coming week, and observes them implementing or modeling these activities.*

PRESCHOOL CLASS-BASED CHILD SERVICES

The preschool teachers provide:

- classroom instruction four hours daily,
- regularly scheduled home visits,
- regularly scheduled visits to nursery schools and day-care centers to correlate individual student needs.
- assessment of the developmental and academic goals of their students and development of IEPs to meet the goals,
- regularly scheduled parent-teacher conferences and parent group meetings,
- service as members of the local screening committee,
- inservice training activities to staff and parents.

PRESCHOOL CLASS-BASED ACTIVITIES

Language/Cognitive

Group I

During the first part of the period, the total group works on language activities such as:

- using syntactic structures in spontaneous conversation (also parts of speech, plurals, negatives, adjectives, prepositions, pronouns, etc.),
- expanding receptive language abilities (for syntactic structures; parts of speech; following two-, three-, and four-part commands),
- sequencing order of musical instruments,
- answering questions following a story,
- identifying environmental sounds,
- describing similarities/differences in objects,
- drawing analogies,
- defining words.

Later, this group is divided into smaller groups to focus on cognitive areas such as:

- colors,
- shapes,
- number skills,
- seriation (of colors, objects, size, stories),
- same/different,
- sorting (size, function, category),
- body parts,
- weather recognition,
- what's missing in pictures,
- opposites/attributes.

Group II

For the first twenty minutes of instruction, this group works on the following language and cognitive areas in a large group setting:

- colors,
- shapes,
- "noun and adjective" phrases,
- attributes,
- same/different,
- object function,
- body part function,
- prepositions/directions,
- classification (two categories),
- sequencing,
- number concept (1-3),
- count one-to-one correspondence,
- identification of what's missing in a picture.

During the next twenty-five minutes of this period, teachers and aides work with children individually or in pairs on language and/or cognitive goals. Activity centers are set up for the other children in the group and are supervised by parent volunteers and/or sixth grade volunteers.

During the last part of the period, children who are in need of additional motor training or help with sensory motor activities go to another classroom. The children remaining from this group reinforce language/cognitive skills, learned earlier, with songs, records, and stories.

Group III

The children in this group primarily work with the teacher and/or an aide on a one-to-one basis. During the time when children are not working with the teacher (aide), there is a volunteer who does vestibular stimulation (balance reactions, spinning, rolling) and supervises sand play. Common language and cognitive goals and activities for this group of children are:

- establishment and maintenance of eye contact,
- gross and fine motor imitation,
- imitation of consonant and vowel sounds,
- following simple directions (stand up, sit down, etc.),
- labeling objects/pictures (expressive/receptive),
- identification of simple action pictures,
- identification, sorting, and matching of colors and shapes,
- development of the concept of object permanence and object function.

Gross Motor

Group I

In a large group, the children work together on pre-kindergarten motor activities. The major objectives of this group are:

- to learn to take turns,
- to follow directions,
- to improve dynamic and static balance.

The activities of the group range from formal games (e.g., "Duck, Duck Goose, "Hot Potato", etc.) to walking on a balance beam and standing on one foot; throwing, catching, and kicking balls; performing obstacle courses and scooter board activities.

Group II

This group is basically unstructured. The children are urged to experiment on different types of equipment available. The main objectives of this group are:

- to improve static and dynamic balance,
- to develop vestibular stimulation,
- to develop motor planning abilities.

Examples of some of the activities of this group are:

- walking on balance boards,
- maneuvering through simple obstacle courses,
- rolling on mats,
- participating in ball games.

Group III

This group is for the non-ambulatory or recently ambulatory child. The main goals for these children are:

- to break up and integrate primitive reflexes,
- to develop righting and balance reactions,
- to develop motor planning abilities (maneuvering whole body, eye-hand coordination, and visual tracking).

The activities for this group involves the following types of equipment: big barrel, tunnel, large therapy ball, wedge, therapy roll, 15" ball, bean bags and basket, gym balls, nerf balls, bowling pins, scooter boards, rocker boards, balance board, rocking boat/bridge, bubbles, bells, push/pull toys.

Examples of activities for this group are:

- sitting on a ball and maintaining balance/position as ball is rocked gently,
- squatting to pick up objects,
- rolling on mat or floor,
- walking up and down stairs.

Self-help, fine-motor, and social skills are incorporated into the curriculum and taught in heterogeneous groups. This allows for both peer models and individual instruction when necessary. The preschool children participate in music instruction conducted by the general education music teacher and also go to the school library. When appropriate, they attend school assemblies with the primary elementary students. The staff plan field trips and teaching units to correlate with these trips.

Behavior management techniques are used consistently throughout the preschool day. Positive reinforcement, primary reinforcers, ignoring, social praise, token systems, and time-out are used. Individual behavior programs are established on the basis of the child's individual needs and the severity of the behavior that the team desires to increase or extinguish.

Behavior management techniques are also employed while other skills are being taught. This is directly related to developing a positive self-concept in the preschool child. For example, increasing a child's skill level in gross-motor will make the child feel better about himself/herself and thus, an improvement in self-concept will occur. Working to develop a positive self-concept in a child is a fundametnal element of the preschool curriculum.

PRIMARY CLASS-BASED CHILD SERVICES

The primary teachers:

- provide classroom instruction for six hours daily,
- assess the developmental and academic goals of their students and develop an IEP to meet the goals set for each student,
- participate in identification, preparation, and continuous monitoring of all eligible students for mainstreaming,
- schedule parent conferences and parent observations,
- provide inservice training activities to staff and parents,
- serve as members of the local screening committee.

PRIMARY CURRICULUM

The primary program curriculum is individualized for each student and focuses on skill development in language; cognitive, perceptual motor, self-help, social/emotional development; and readiness skills in language arts, reading, and writing.

The primary level curriculum goals are for the students to achieve greater independence and to increase their ability to function within a regular education setting. While each student is individually assessed and follows his/her own unique educational objectives, the child is also evaluated as a part of a classroom group. Thus, both academic and behavioral goals are stressed.

The students in the four primary classes are grouped according to functional abilities. These classes are referred to as Levels 1, 2, 3, and 4.

Curriculum of Levels 1 and 2

Academic goals at Levels 1 and 2 attempt to follow those of the regular classroom K-2 levels. Whenever possible, materials and curriculum from the general education program are used and adapted. Teachers reinforce children's strengths while remediating or compensating for their disabilities. Students are instructed in achievement groups, are taught individually and in small groups, and are convened as a whole class for various subjects. Subjects are reading, math, language, physical education, music, art, science, and social studies.

Behavior modification strategies and techniques, ranging from tangible to immediate rewards to intermittent verbal praise, are used. The classroom is structured like the general education classroom to assure a smooth transition for the students who are mainstreamed.

Curriculum of Levels 3 and 4

Instruction at Levels 3 and 4 is based on the students' rate of progress. Repetition is used to ensure mastery of concepts. The content of instruction varies as to the child's academic level. Academic instruction ranges from a preschool cognitive level to a beginning first grade level

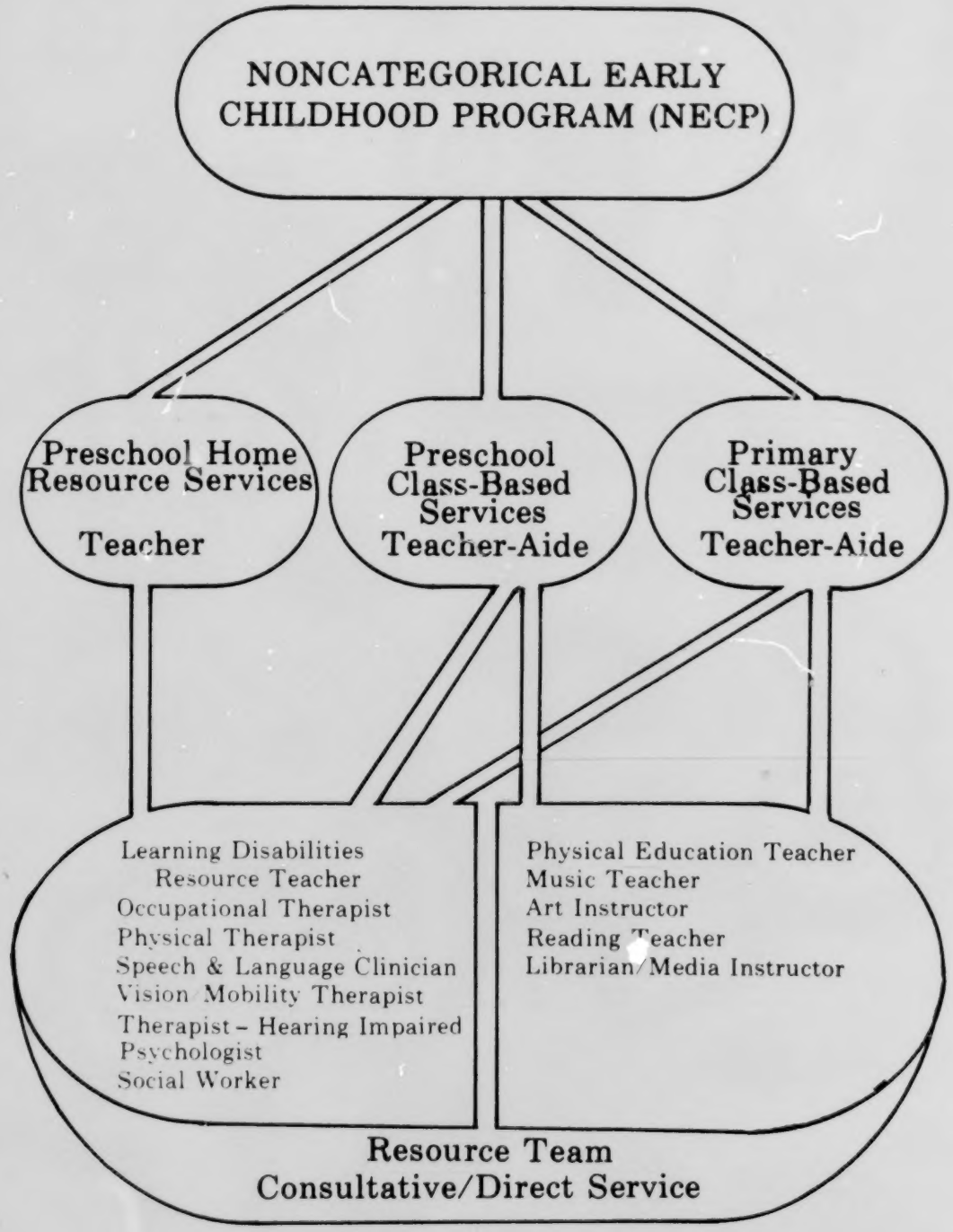
in reading and math. Whenever possible, instruction and materials are correlated with the general education curriculum.

To help the students achieve their goals, lessons are broken down into small steps (task analyzed). Task analysis may be necessary because of one or all of the following:

- language disabilities,
- fine and/or gross motor deficiencies,
- noncompliant behaviors and/or poor attention span.

Language development activities concentrate on comprehension, proper syntactics, and articulation. Fine motor activities focus on visual motor tasks, self-help skills, drawing, printing, and other paper-pencil activities. Gross motor activities improve the child's ability to move the body, use various equipment properly, participate in group-oriented games, increase strength, and improve coordination.

Appropriate behavior is stressed throughout the school day. Several methods such as token reinforcement and special activities are used to reinforce a higher and/or more consistent behavior. A "time-out" corner has been helpful in controlling and eliminating disruptive behavior. As the child learns to manage his/her behavior and gains confidence in self, more responsibility is placed upon the child to accomplish tasks independently.


NONCATEGORICAL EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM (NECP)
Preschool Home Resource Services
Teacher
Preschool Class-Based Services
Teacher-Aide
Primary Class-Based Services
Teacher-Aide
Learning Disabilities Resource Teacher
Occupational Therapist
Physical Therapist
Speech & Language Clinician
Vision Mobility Therapist
Therapist – Hearing Impaired
Psychologist
Social Worker
Physical Education Teacher
Music Teacher
Art Instructor
Reading Teacher
Librarian/Media Instructor
Resource Team
Consultative/Direct Service

23

SERVICES OF THE RESOURCE TEAM

The resource team forms a multidisciplinary unit to improve services offered to students in the NECP. As a team, they coordinate services and provide for each student efficiently.

The resource team provides direct and consultative services to the entire NECP. In addition, all services are provided to eligible students in grades four through six, and the resource team is also available to provide information and materials to children not enrolled in the program.

The resource team has been invaluable to the success of the NECP program. The consultative services that it provides individualizes the students' curriculum and assists in the remediation of specific handicaps. The resource team works closely with teachers and aides to ensure a smooth program for the children, one in which their special activities are well integrated into their classroom work.

However, a fully staffed on-site resource team is not essential to successful replication of the NECP model. With careful planning, district or county resource specialists could be used to augment a noncategorical program.

Resource Team

Number of NECP Students Benefiting from Related Services [a]

Related Services				
group	speech/language	occup.therapy	physical therapy	vision services
Preschool				
Year 1	6[b]	2	5	0
Year 2	17	4	5	0
Primary				
Year 1	24	4	6[c]	2
Year 2	27	6	7	2

[a] Speech/language and vision services were provided to eligible general education students in addition to the NECP students.

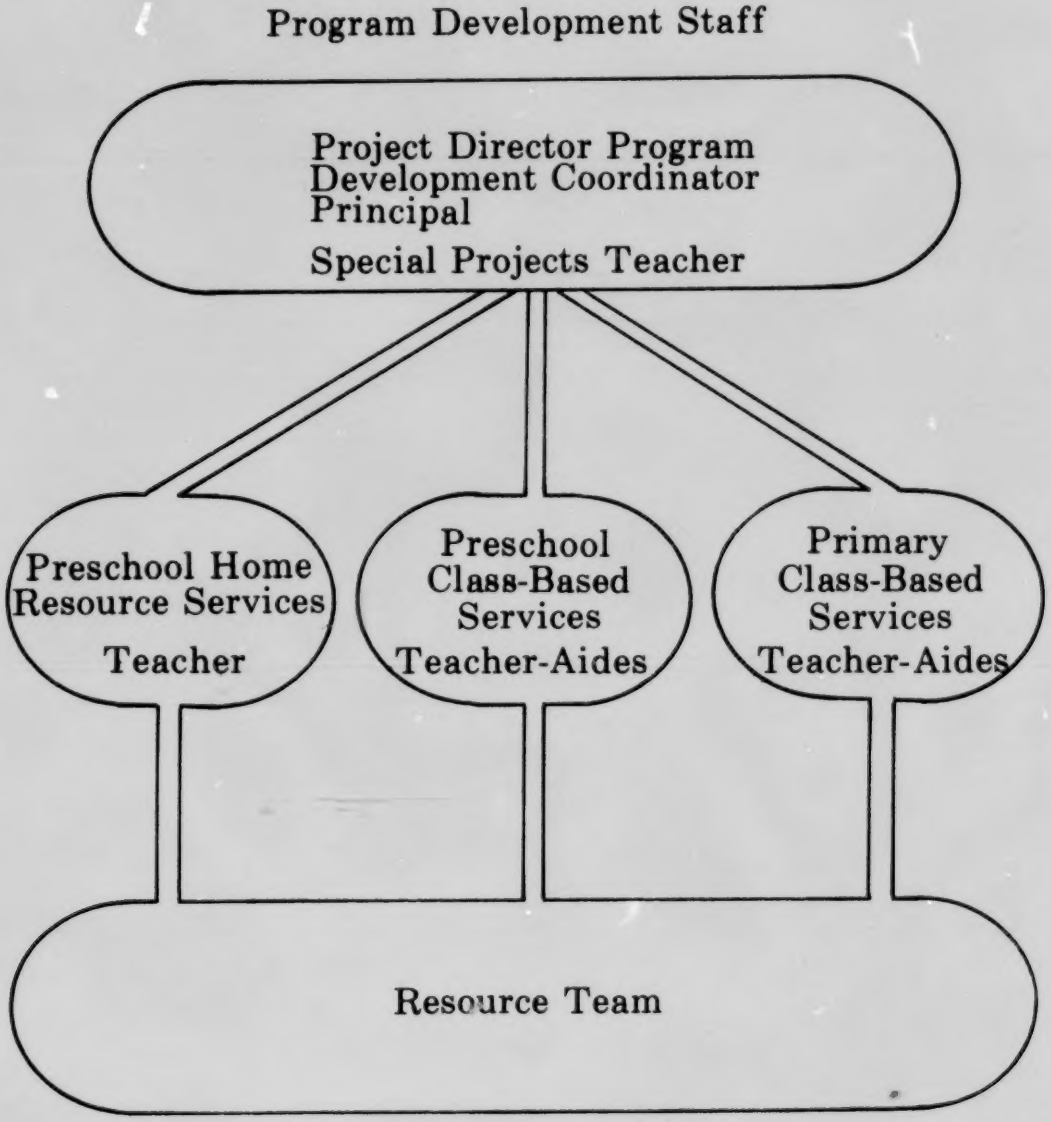
[b] Speech/language clinician served the other preschool students as consultant

[c] Additional primary students were in a gross-motor class.

25

26

NONCATEGORICAL EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM (NECP)



PROJECT DIRECTOR

The project director has the primary responsibility for managing the project and establishing the overall policy; for program planning and development; and for coordinating the operational components. These responsibilities require coordination on a federal level with the Bureau of Education for the Handicapped, the state level with the State Education Agency, and the local level with other programs and administrators in Fairfax County Public Schools.

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR

The program development coordinator is in charge of the on-site development of the program and daily supervisory responsibilities and provides:

- assistance to the school principal for integrating general and special education,
- guidance to teachers and support personnel in instructional management,
- evaluation of project personnel,
- participation in IEP meetings,
- liaison between project services and parents,
- dissemination of program information.

This is a full-time position, but is not essential for replication of the program. These responsibilities could be provided by the administrative personnel of the school.

SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

The role of the principal is a basic one: to integrate the disparate elements of the school community into a functioning unit. The supervisory responsibilities listed for the program development coordinator could be provided by the school principal if a coordinator should not be available.

SPECIAL PROJECTS TEACHER

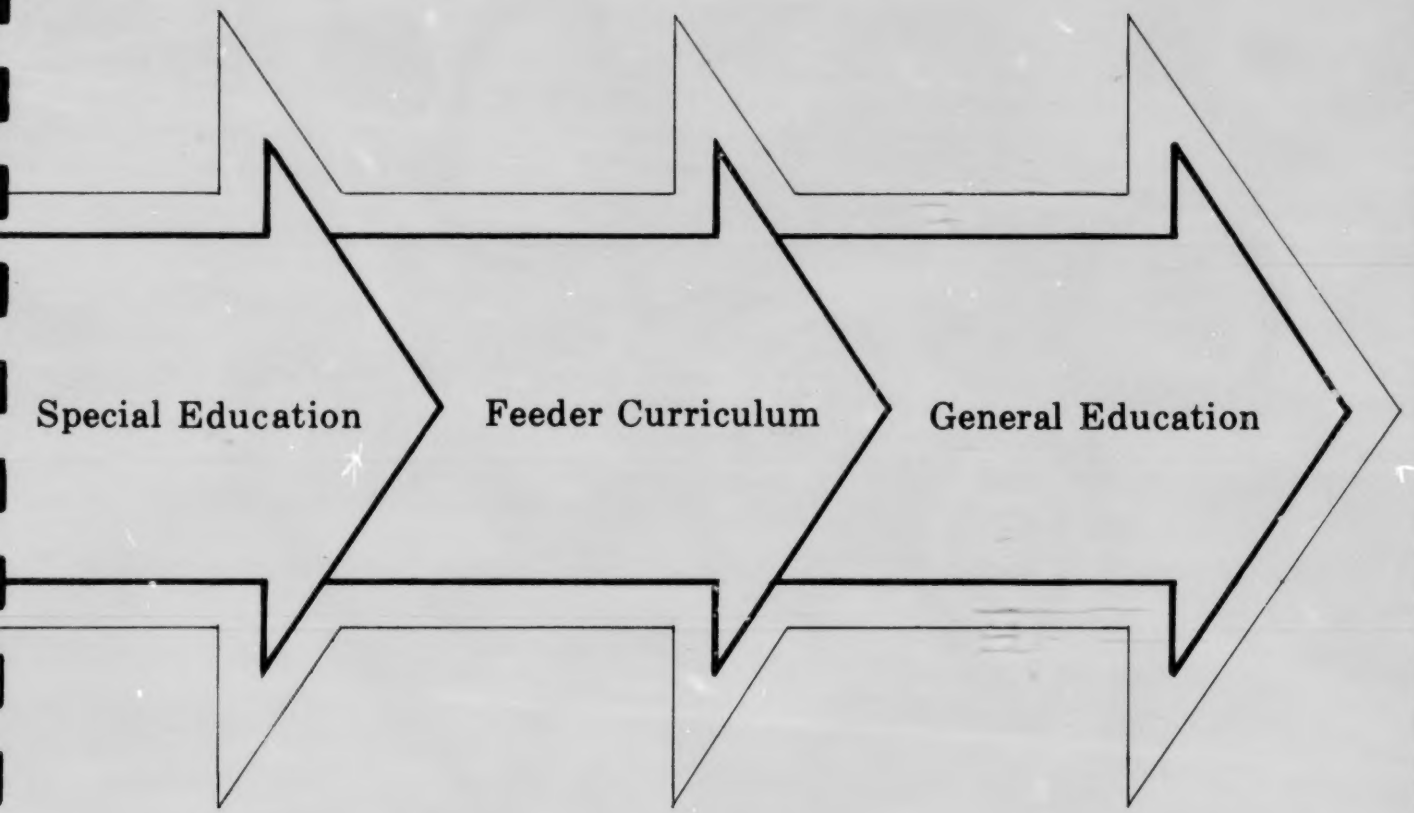
The special projects teacher provides:

- documentation of all program activities,
- workshops responsive to staff needs,
- assistance in monitoring the efforts of the various components of the program,
- integration between the general and special education sectors at all levels to include parents, students, and staff.

This position is not essential in order to replicate the program, but can be of great benefit to a project.

MAINSTREAMING

MAINSTREAMING



MAINSTREAMING

Introduction and Philosophy

A central theme of the Noncategorical Early Childhood Program is integration within a general education environment. This is accomplished through an extensive mainstreaming program.

The mainstreaming component offers a systematic approach to integrating handicapped children into general education. Mainstreaming a child may involve a variety of options ranging from having a child visit a general classroom part of the day to having the child placed in a general classroom for the full school day. The actual placement of a child is preceded by observation and consultation between staff members and parents to identify the child's specific needs. Follow-up conferences are held to monitor the child's performance throughout the mainstreaming process.

The mainstreaming process is a continuum and should include the following options:

- The student is in a special education class all day.
- The special education class as a whole has lunch and recess at the same time as general education classes.
- The student is in a general education class for social studies and/or science. He/she may be in a general education class for social skills and physical education, art, or music as well.
- The student is in the general education class for one academic subject (reading or math). He/she may be in general education classroom for social integration (PE, music, and/or art), social studies, and/or science.
- The student is in a general education class for both academic (reading and math) subjects. He/she may be in a general education classroom for social integration (PE, music, and/or art), social studies, and/or science.
- The student is in a general education classroom all day, with the special education teacher providing additional support.
- The student is placed in a general education class and taken off special education roster.

A "Reciprocal Service Agreement" is a method of compensating the general education teacher for the time requirements of meetings and the demands of the mainstreaming procedures. This agreement proves rewarding to both regular and special educators.

Academic gains often become secondary when the initial mainstreaming placement of students is being considered. The nonhandicapped students should gain an awareness and acceptance of handicapped peers by being given the opportunity to interact and socialize with these students and the integrated student may develop a positive self-image. Appropriate placement should make mainstreaming a meaningful experience for all participants.

Number of Primary Children Mainstreamed

	Activities											
	recess/ lunch	PE	art	music	social	library	social studies	science	hand writing	spelling	reading	math
Year 1 (N= 24)	24	20		16	2	4	4					8
Year 2 (N= 36)	33[a]	24	5	4	3	7	10	10	2	3	3	3

[a] Four students go to lunch and recess with general education class. The rest of the students participate in those activities at the same time as general education classes do.

Development of NECP Mainstreaming Procedure

Prior to the institution of the mainstreaming component, the following problems were addressed in a special committee of general and special education teachers.

1. Lack of teacher interaction

   There had been a concern over random placement of special education students into general education classes. A procedure to involve regular education teachers was necessary.

2. Little teacher preparation

   The general education teachers needed more background on students who were to be mainstreamed into their classrooms. Special education teachers needed more background on the general education class. A support system prior to and after placement had to be established.

3. Lack of teacher feedback

   Special education teachers were not being notified of problems the general education teachers had with the special students. A need for follow-up on mainstreamed students existed.

4. Lack of parental involvement

   Parents mispreceived the meaning and goals of mainstreaming. Parents needed to be more informed and involved in the process.

The NECP staff tried to resolve some of these problems by developing a systematic approach to mainstreaming with a consistent set of procedures, a monitoring device, an accountability system, and an evaluation process. These procedures provided structure to the process of integration of nonhandicapped and handicapped students and eliminated random placement. The preliminary set of procedures was revised several times and then implemented. After field testing, the process was further revised.

The mainstreaming procedures were incorporated into a packet and all NECP personnel were briefed on the process. A set of written procedures was developed to accompany the flow chart which delineated the responsibilities of each person involved.

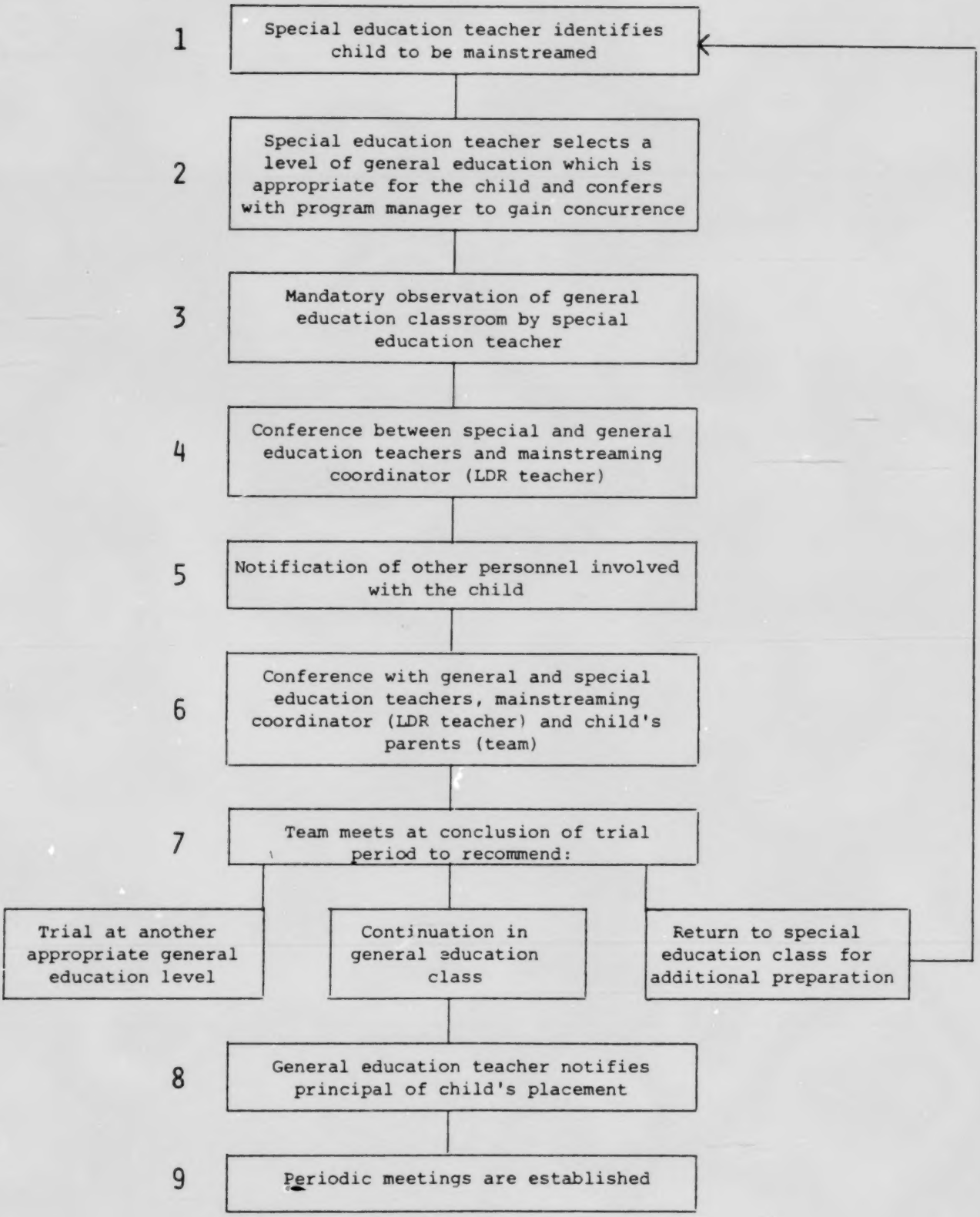
For accountability, the NECP staff felt it was important to have a record of all steps in the mainstreaming process, and a form was developed for this purpose. The forms were centrally located so that all personnel would have access to them. Every few months a teacher questionnaire was completed by the mainstreaming teachers to evaluate the students' progress and placement.

After each step in the mainstreaming process, the results were recorded on the "Mainstreaming Record Sheet", which documented observations, conferences, trial period dates, skills, and/or any modifications needed for the special student.

A mainstreaming questionnaire was distributed monthly to assess the mainstreaming goals. The mainstreaming teachers were encouraged to express their ideas and record problems. Although problems might have been previously discussed between educators, the written records assisted in documenting problems and implementing changes.

The staff of the NECP project feel that consistent use of set procedures has been the main factor in the mainstreaming success rate. The NECP mainstreaming system assures a successful experience for the child by providing proper interaction and close communication between all persons involved in the integration process.

PROCEDURE FOR MAINSTREAMING


1
Special education teacher identifies child to be mainstreamed
2
Special education teacher selects a level of general education which is appropriate for the child and confers with program manager to gain concurrence
3
Mandatory observation of general education classroom by special education teacher
4
Conference between special and general education teachers and mainstreaming coordinator (LDR teacher)
5
Notification of other personnel involved with the child
6
Conference with general and special education teachers, mainstreaming coordinator (LDR teacher) and child's parents (team)
7
Team meets at conclusion of trial period to recommend:
Trial at another appropriate general education level
Continuation in general education class
Return to special education class for additional preparation
8
General education teacher notifies principal of child's placement
9
Periodic meetings are established

The Procedure for Mainstreaming

Steps

Special education teachers should complete Items 1-4 on the mainstreaming record sheet prior to the teacher conference.

1. Special education teacher will identify the child to be mainstreamed by using one or all of the following techniques:
   a) Behavior survey
   b) Parent interview
   c) Observations
   d) Academic achievement - assessment tests

2. Special education teacher will select a level of general education which is appropriate for child placement. The subject area and teacher will be selected at this time, subject to general education teachers approval. Special education teacher confers with the Program Manager to gain concurrence.

3. An observation of the general education classroom where the child will be mainstreamed must be made by the special education teacher. The teachers will work out a mutually convenient plan for observations. Aides/substitutes may be utilized for this purpose. If possible, the general education teacher is strongly recommended to observe this child in the special education program.

4. The special education teacher will schedule a conference among general education, special education, the mainstreaming coordinator (LDF teacher), and the Program Manager. The agenda will include the following items:
   a. Why this child is a good candidate for mainstreaming?
   b. Specific behavior techniques used for the special education student.
   c. What are his/her learning strategies?
   d. The child's history, background, and family situation, if applicable for a better understanding of the child.
   e. Specific assistance that the special education teacher gives in mainstreaming this child.
   f. Projected starting dates and times.

The following options may be used in setting up a conference time:

a. From 8:30 to 9:00 a.m. any free morning,

b. From 3:30 to 4:00 p.m. any free afternoon,

c. Release time utilized (PE and music),

d. Use of a substitute/aide during school hours.

(All of the above options are within contract hours.)

5. The special education teacher will notify all personnel involved with this child, e.g., PE, art, music to:

   - find out if additional assistance is necessary,

   - answer any and all questions,

   - give description of the child.

6. The special education teacher will set up a conference between the involved teachers and the parents and the mainstreaming coordinator (LDR teacher). Agenda should include:

   a. parents' feelings about mainstreaming,

   b. clarification of mainstreaming and presentation of the two different learning environments,

   c. feedback on child's behavior,

   d. parents' concurring the appropriateness of this placement,

   e. setting a specific trial period, length of which is flexible, but indicating a date when placement should be reviewed. (special education teacher will communicate with parents either in written or oral form),

   f. revision of the child's IEP.

7. At the trial review date, the team (teachers, LDR teacher, and parents) will meet to discuss the appropriateness of the placement. The alternatives for the child are as follows:

   a. remains in the original placement,

   b. is tried at another general education level,

   c. returns to special education class for additional preparation.

8. General education teachers will notify principal of special education child's placement and have a notation made on office copy of class list. The parent's name is added to the room parents' list.

9. The special education teacher will be responsible for scheduling follow-up meetings every nine weeks for the purpose of reviewing the child's progress. They will prepare a child goal sheet which can be easily checked off by the general education teacher. Resource teachers should be given the opportunity to participate. A reevaluation of services given to the general education teacher should be made. Refer to "Reciprocal Service Agreement." Any changes (additions or deletions) should be noted.

MAINSTREAMING RECORD SHEET

Special Education Teacher's Name _____

General Education Teacher's Name _____

1 Child's Name _____

2 Initials	Grade/Class Level	Subject Area	Program Manager

3 _____ Observation by _____ Time _____ Date_____

4 _____ Teacher Conference: Time _____ Date _____

Mainstreaming Coordinator _____

a. Why is this child a good candidate for mainstreaming?

b. What specific behavior techniques are used with this child?

c. What are child's learning strategies?

d. What assistance will the special education teacher give in mainstreaming this child? (Reciprocal Service Agreement)

e. What is the child's history, background, and family situation, if applicable, for a better understanding of the child?

f. Projected starting dates and time:

	Initials	
5	_____	Notification of other involved personnel, e.g., P E , music, art, etc.
	_____	a. _____
	_____	b. _____
	_____	c. _____
	_____	d. _____
6		Parent Conference: Time _____ Date _____
		Participants: _____
		_____
		_____
		Parent's Comments: _____
		_____
		_____
7		Trial Period: Beginning Date _____
		Length of Trial _____
		Parent's Signature _____
		Trial Review Date _____
		Recommendation _____
8	_____	Notification of Principal _____ Principal's Signature
9	_____	Follow-up Meeting: Time _____ Date _____
		Involved Staff _____
		_____
		Reevaluation of Reciprocal Service Agreement _____
		_____
		_____

Two copies of this completed form should be made. Send one to the general education teacher involved and one to _____.

Additional Notes to Mainstreaming Record Sheet

The mainstreaming conference includes the learning disabilities resource teacher as a third party although the principal, or project manager, could also serve the same function. The third party monitors the conference, and should have an understanding of the needs of a general education teacher, as well as those of a special education teacher, and be able to integrate those needs. Duties range from monitoring the mainstreaming procedures to determine whether the child has been placed appropriately, to monitoring the "Reciprocal Service Agreement" and identifying supplementary materials.

Reciprocal Service Agreement

The general education teacher's involvement with mainstreaming requires extra work, but the "Reciprocal Service Agreement" provides assistance. The "Reciprocal Service Agreement" is reached prior to mainstreaming and is recorded in Step 4d of the record sheet. The following suggested services can be provided to the general education teachers by the special education staff:

- sharing movies/filmstrips/records,
- helping with the assessment of children,
- teaching a lesson,
- taking over an assigned school duty (lunch, recess, bus)
- planning and constructing bulletin boards,
- using a teacher as a consultant (for field trips, lessons, etc.)
- ordering or locating teaching materials,
- making games or teaching materials,
- teaching a group consistently (the general education teacher has to give guidelines; the special education teacher would prepare lessons accordingly),
- making dittos.

The following is a chart of how the NECP educators negotiated the "Reciprocal Service Agreement".

Reciprocal Service Agreement

The "Reciprocal Service Agreement" is a plan worked out prior to mainstreaming wherein if a child is mainstreamed into a general education classroom and the special education teacher responsible for student gives some services that can be mutually agreed upon by the two teachers.

Examples

General Education Teacher	Special Education Teacher
No. 1 Provides services to one special education student all subjects except reading	No. 1 Helps assess general education students hrough diagnostic tests, observations
No. 2 Provides services to one special education student all subjects except reading/math	No. 1 Provides services to one general education science group one hour, once a week
No. 3 Provides services to one special education student one and one-half hours a day for a variety of subjects	No. 2 Provides services to one general education reading group one and one-quarter hours, once a week in the library
No. 4 Provides services to one special education student all subjects except reading, and provides services to one special education student one and one-half hours a day in reading	No. 1 Provides additional math and reading materials to general education teacher for use with general education students
No. 5 Provides services to one special education student one and one-quarter hours in reading	No. 1 Provides services for one and one-quarter hours one day a week, area specified by mutual agreement

FAIRFAX COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Noncategorical Early Childhood Program
Garfield Elementary School, 7101 Old Keene Mill Road
Springfield, Virginia 22150 (703) 451-7140

MAINSTREAMING QUESTIONNAIRE

Please complete and submit by _____. Comment areas are optional.

Teacher's Name _____

Room No. _____

Number of children mainstreamed into your class _____ ___

Names of children mainstreamed into your class:

_____ _____

_____ _____

1. Has the Special Education student been placed at an appropriate level?

   Yes _____ No _____

   If no, please explain _____

2. Has an observation taken place? Yes _____ No _____

   If yes, by whom? _____

   Comments _____

   _____

   _____

3. Was there a conference between special and regular education teachers?

   Yes _____ No _____

   Length of conference _____ Date of conference _____

   Comments _____

   _____

   _____

4. Was a contract between special and regular education made with reference to utilization of aides or teachers to help in the regular education classroom? Yes _____ No _____

Briefly describe contract _____

_____

Are the terms satisfactory to you? Yes _____ No _____

If no, please explain _____

_____

_____

5. Were other involved personnel notified? Yes _____ No _____

Comments _____

_____

_____

6. Was a consensus reached at the parent conference? Yes _____ No _____

Comments _____

_____

_____

7. Give dates of trial period _____

8. Have periodic meetings been set between special and regular education teachers? Yes _____ No _____

9. Is mainstreaming having a positive effect on regular education students?

Yes _____ No _____

Please explain _____

_____

_____

10. Describe some of the problems you are having with mainstreaming _____

_____

_____

_____

11. How might some of these problems be resolved by the school system?

12. General comments, suggestions, and ideas

(Revised NC/3-79)

FEEDER CURRICULUM

FEEDER CURRICULUM

A Process for Development

A "feeder curriculum" provides a smooth and successful transition to general education for the special child. Special and general educators agree that mastery of certain behaviors and skills is necessary for success in an integrated class. Often a mainstreamed student has difficulty in the regular classroom because he or she is lacking a particular skill.

> *For example, before Michael, the speech- and language-impaired primary student described in the introduction, was mainstreamed into a regular classroom, he followed a parallel program of study development which taught and reinforced the skills that he would need for second grade.*

The goal of a feeder curriculum is to assist teachers in using a variety of materials and strategies to teach specific skills. The NECP staff used the on-site reading series as the basis for the feeder curriculum. A comprehensive sequential list of reading skills presented in the reading series was correlated with that in the spelling and language series. The skills were further broken down through task analysis into sub-skills.

The skills were then charted to show the number of the page in the teacher's reading manual where a particular skill was presented and the correlating spelling and/or language pages. Supplementary materials that assist in teaching, reinforcing, and reviewing the skills were also noted.

A feeder curriculum can be developed for all subject areas through the following process:

1. Identify the skills presented in the general education curriculum.
2. List the sequence in which they are presented in general education.
3. Analyze the components necessary for the mastery of the skill.
4. List the materials that can be used to teach, reinforce, and review each component of the skill.
5. Chart the general education skill and match it with special education supplementary materials.

Examples of a feeder curriculum that might help clarify the process can be found on the following pages. Three levels of skills for math and reading are listed along with the correlation of the first grade general education curriculum (Fairfax County Program of Studies) and the objectives listed in the Special Education Individual Education Program Manual (IEP). Examples of supplementary materials that can be used to teach and/or reinforce a particular skill are listed at the bottom of the page. Teachers are also encouraged to list additional materials they may use.

Skill	Math* T.E.**	Text* W.B.***	Related Materials	Fairfax County Program of Studies	I.E.P. Manual ... Indicates Primary Objective
	Page	Page	Page		
Counts and matches the number to the set	15, 17, 19, 21, 23, 25, 27	15, 17, 19	2, 4 305	Counting the number of objects in a set by assigning each object the appropriate number	Counting and matching to 10 0009-0220 (Comp. Nos.) 02207-Counts and matches up to 10

Examples of supplementary materials that can be used to teach/reinforce the above skills:

Structural Arithmetic by Stern, Stern, Bould
Beans, Tongue Depressors
Ideal - Wipe Off Cards
Continental Press dittos
DLM Number Puzzles
DLM Sorting Box and Accessories
DLM Counting Picture Cards

*Holt School Mathematics, Level I, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc.

**T.E. - Teacher's Edition
***W.B. - Workbook

Skill	Math* T.E.**	Text* W.B.***	Related Materials	Fairfax County Program of Studies	I.E.P. Manual No. Indicates Primary Objective
	Page	Page			
Recognizes and identifies one-half, one-third, and one-fourth with concrete objects and pictures of objects.	185-186 187-188 191-192 193-194 195-196 197-198	185-186 187-188 191-192 193-194 195-196 197-198	Cassette GG8 Transparency Unit 4 Activity 1, 2, 3 Cassette ST7 Cassette ST8	Identify the fractional number symbols 1/2, 1/3, 1/4 by matching them to shaded regions. Separate a set into equivalent subsets.	0010-0040 *0020 - Divide real objects and a picture of real objects into halves and quarters

Examples of supplementary materials that can be used to teach/reinforce the above skills:

Activity Materials - Paper, Crayon, Scissors
Distar Arith II - Lesson 34 - Fractions
Milton Bradley - Fractions Discs (manipulative)
Tapes and Dittos
Aero - Learning Unit B - Level 3-6
DLM Fraction Match-Ups

*Holt School Mathematics, Level I, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc.

**T.E. - Teacher's Edition
***W.B. - Workbook

Skill	Math* T.E.**	Text* W.B.***	Related Materials	Fairfax County Program of Studies	I.E.P. Manual No. Indicates Primary Objective
	Page	Page			
Identifies value of sets of coins up to 25¢	203-204	203-204	Transparency Unit 4, Activity 6, 7 Transparency Unit 4 Activity 8, 9	Determine money values up to 25¢ by finding the value of a collection of pennies, nickels, and dimes, and write the value using the symbol ¢	Identifies money values to 99¢ 0010-0080 (Comp. No.) 0080-Write money values up to 25¢ using the symbol "cents sign"

Examples of supplementary materials that can be used to teach/reinforce the above skills:

DLM Money Stamps and Money Game
Milton Bradley - Play Coins
Continental Press
Mafex Materials (Math Manipulatives, Games, Ditto)

*Holt School Mathematics, Level I, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc.

**T.E. - Teacher's Edition
***W.B. - Workbook

FEEDER CURRICULUM ANALYSIS

Skill	Reading Text* T.E.[1]	W.B.[2]	A.T.[3]	Spelling Text**	Language Text	Fairfax County Program of Studies	I.E.P. Manual No. Indicates Primary Objective
	Page	Page	Page	Page			
Names consonants in initial positions	*15-16, 17, 22, 36, 40, 172*-175, 241	2, 5, 14, 29, 30, 33, 37, 39, 49	2, 4, 17	1, 2, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 18, 20, 22, 24, 26, 30, 31, 35	----	Beginning sounds--naming word with same beginning sound as given consonant letter	Initial consonant 0060-0090 (Computer No.) 0090 Demonstrates knowledge of sound-symbol relationship for 21 consonants when presented at the beginning of a word

60

Examples of supplementary materials that can be used to teach/reinforce the above skills:

DLM - Auditory Training Tapes
Harcourt Brace - Speech to Print
Follett - Sound Order Sense
Educational Pe. ormance Association - MWM Kit
American Guide - Peabody Articulation Cards
Spellbinda Ins. - Spellbinder
Word Making Productions, Inc. - Word Making Cards

*Houghton Mifflin, Rockets (a pre-primer)
**Kottmeyer-Clause Spelling, Grade 1

[1]T.E. - Teacher's Edition
[2]W.B. - Workbook
[3]A.T. - Achievement Test

Skill	Reading Text* T.E.[1] Page	W.B.[2] Page	A.T.[3] Page	Spelling Text** Page	Language Text*** T.E. Page	W.B. Page	Fairfax County Program of Studies	I.E.P. Manual No. Indicates Primary Objective
Classifies objects and pictures according to category or characteristic	142, 145-146, 162-163, 242, 297	25, 47	15	33	6-7, 29, 76-77	8-9, 19, 60, 68-71	Group and classify objects and pictures	Visual Readiness 0200-0220 Names objects or pictures Sensory Perception 0540-0570 Discriminates objects; identifies picture of object that is different when given pictures of objects that are the same except one

Examples of supplementary materials that can be used to teach/reinforce the above skills:

Milton Bradley - Sort-A-Card Game
Instructo Activity Kit - Classification
DLM Materials - Same or Different
Picture Association Cards
Sorting Box
Teaching Resources - Sorting and Sets Cards

*Houghton Mifflin, Rockets (a pre-primer)
**Kottmeyer-Clause Spelling, Grade 1
***Ginn Language Program, Grade 1, Ginn and Company

[1]T.E. - Teacher's Edition
[2]W.B. - Workbook
[3]A.T. - Achievement Test

Skill	Reading Text* T.E.[1]	W.B.[2]	A.T.[3]	Spelling Text	Language Text** T.E.	W.B.	Fairfax County Program of Studies	I.E.P. Manual No. Indicates Primary Objective
	Page	Page	Page		Page	Page		
Draws conclusions from oral or written information	192-193, 195, 212, 221, 267	31, 43, 44	18	----	31, 54, 75, 80-81, 86, 120	31, 67, 75	Draws conclusions or make inferences from information stated.	0940-Reading comprehension 0150-0210 Draws inferences and generalizations from ideas in story

Examples of supplementary materials that can be used to teach/reinforce the above skills:

Barnell Loft Series
Drawing Conclusions Series
Reading Comprehension Stories
Frank Schaffer Levels 1. 2
Modern Curriculum Press - Increasing Comp. Skillbooster

*Houghton Mifflin, Rockets (a pre-primer)
**Ginn Language Program, Grade 1, Ginn and Company

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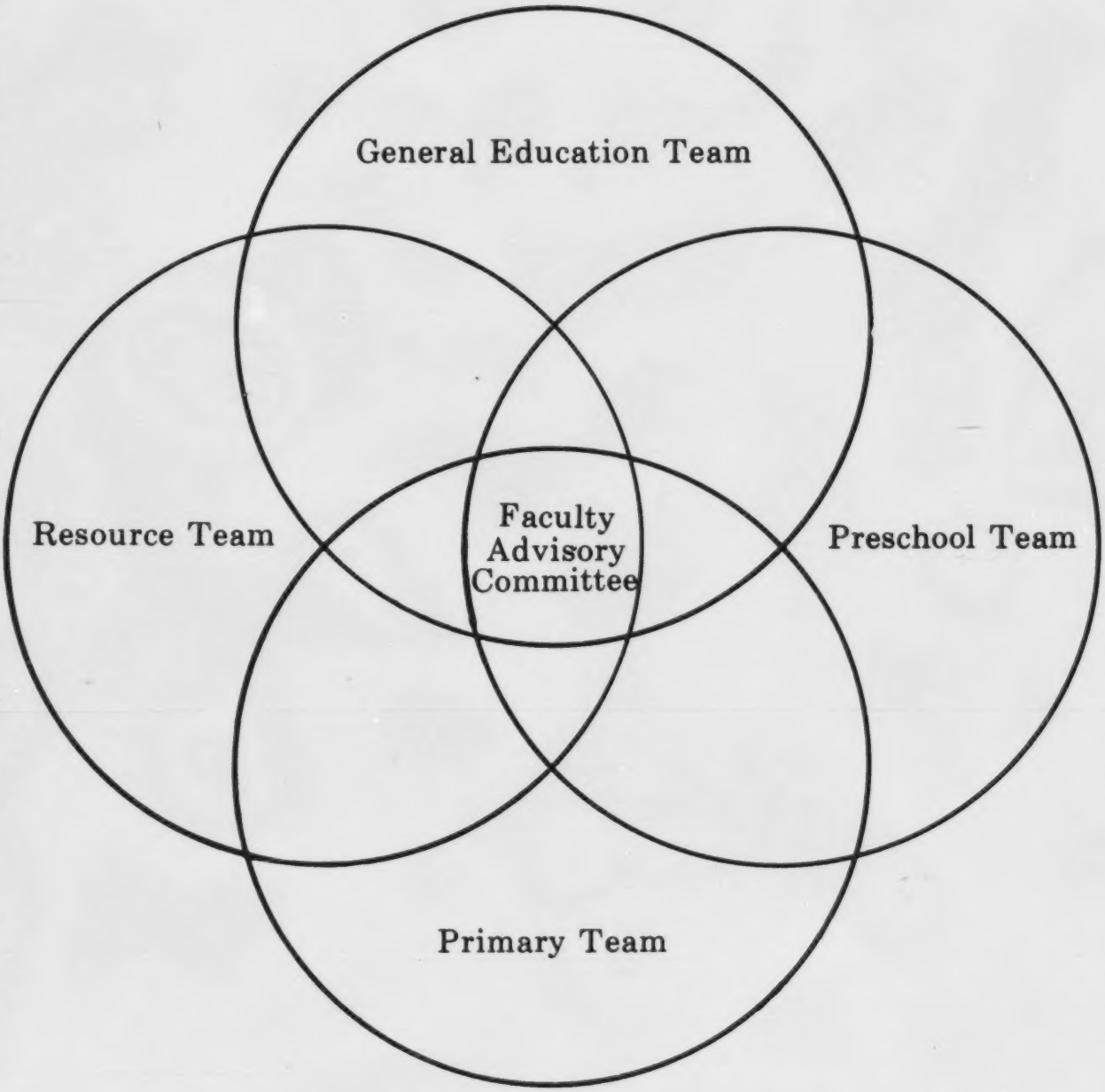
TEAMING

TEAMING


General Education Team
Resource Team
Faculty
Advisory
Committee
Preschool Team
Primary Team

TEAMING

The Noncategorical Early Childhood Program emphasizes "teaming" of personnel and students throughout all levels of the program--preschool, primary, resource, and general education although the implementation of teaming varies.

There are common goals of teaming that occur on all levels of the program:

- to enhance individualization of programming by providing flexible grouping for children
- to provide a communication network for teachers and therapists for planning and decision-making
- to coordinate all of the available resources to provide a more effective educational plan for each student
- to provide an opportunity for teachers to share their information and expertise with one another to benefit the children served

The teaming approach permits heterogeneous and homogeneous grouping of students for different developmental and academic areas. Certain developmental areas, especially language experience, social, and self-help skills are best taught in a heterogeneous group where some students can function as role models while others learn from their peers. Cognitive and core academic areas are best taught in homogeneous groupings which allow the teacher to focus on a specific task. Through grouping, teachers are challenged by working with children at different levels.

The teaming structure encourages students to generalize their language and behavior management skills as they learn how to respond effectively to different adults. By sharing responsibility for students, the teachers are also able to share teaching strategies and insights into the children's learning strengths and weaknesses.

GENERAL EDUCATION TEAMING

The general education classes adopted their present method of teaming approximately nine years ago. The teachers are divided into three teams according to the grade level of children served: Team A, K-1; Team B, 2-3; and Team C, 4-6. Only Teams A and B participated in the NECP Program.

The general education teachers hold weekly team meetings to:

- facilitate communication with administration
- place children in groups,
- plan for reports, parent conferences, or joint activities between classes,
- develop and coordinate units with one another,
- share or brainstorm about groups of children or individuals,
- discuss methods and materials to use with individual children or groups.

The Process of Grouping

The definitive characteristic of the general education teaming concept is achievement grouping of children across homerooms for certain academic subjects. In most cases, this exchange is at the same grade level. This is not ability grouping, but grouping based on formal and informal assessment to determine the level on which a child is performing.

The criteria for determining groupings are as follows:

Grade 1

- Kindergarten readiness test
- Recommendations of previous classroom teacher
- Informal observation and assessment of present homeroom teacher
- Formal tests by reading or learning disabilities teacher or speech clinician (if needed)

Grades 2-3

- Group placement test
- Recommendations of previous classroom teacher
- Informal observations and assessment by present teacher

The information is used by the team to divide the children of the same grade level into three main categories: above average, average, and below average. Individual teachers are assigned to one of these groups. Further subgroupings are determined by:

- the size of the main group (average size is forty children),
- the number of teachers at each grade level,
- the number of aides available to assist teacher with a particular group.

The children in grade one are grouped for reading and math. Students in the second and third grades are grouped for language arts (reading, language, and spelling) and math. The children remain in homerooms for other subject areas. The kindergarten classes are self-contained.

NECP TEAMING

The NECP teachers adopted the teaming procedures from the general education teams. They formed three teams: preschool, primary, and resource. The members of the preschool team were also members of the general education Team A and the members of the primary team were included in the general education Team B. All teams recorded their meetings and distributed these notes to all members of the faculty.

A Faculty Advisory Council (FAC), composed of one member from each team and the principal, met to discuss general school policies and problems. The members relayed information to their respective teams. All faculty members had an opportunity to address their concerns and express their recommendations through their faculty advisory representative.

PRESCHOOL TEAMING

The preschool component of the program consists of three classes of eight children who have mild to severe handicapping conditions. They are grouped heterogeneously for language experience, social, and self-help skills. They are grouped homogeneously for cognitive skills, motor skills, and language syntax. The length of time periods and grouping of students are extremely flexible to meet the specific needs of the children. All teachers provide instruction in each skill area.

Weekly staff meetings are held to discuss student progress. All teachers and aides participate in the meetings to ensure the use of consistent behavior management and teaching strategies. A separate weekly meeting is held to address program development and concerns.

In addition to formal and informal meetings, one of the key communication devices is the yearly goal chart. The goals for individual students in each of the developmental areas are listed on charts displayed in the classroom. Color-coded circles are used to denote whether the goal is emerging or accomplished. Check marks before the goals indicate that they are presently being worked on. These charts communicate where the students are functioning and how far they have come. A similar report check sheet specifying goals that are emerging and/or accomplished is sent home quarterly.

Through these varied channels of communication, the teachers assist each other with planning, sharing, and ordering appropriate supplies and materials. They exchange ideas and techniques on how best to teach specific skills. They collaborate on behavior management programs to provide consistency for students with behavior problems and exchange insights about how students respond to different teachers and in different groupings of children.

The preschool and primary teams also meet together periodically to discuss the goals of the Noncategorical Early Childhood Program.

PRIMARY TEAMING

The primary team is composed of four classes for children with mild to moderate handicapping conditions. The children are grouped on the basis of an assessment of their functional abilities, self-help skills, and academic readiness or achievement. Two classes function below or at the readiness and pre-academic stage, and two classes contain children who are presently working in academic areas. The primary classes average eight to ten students per room.

The two younger primary classes combine for music and physical education, but remain with their base teachers for core academic subjects. An exchange of children between homerooms for core subjects occurs only when the teachers feel it would be advantageous to a particular student.

The two upper primary classes also group for music, art, and physical education instruction. The core academic areas are taught in separate homerooms during the morning hours. Every afternoon the two classes combine for science or social studies instruction and other activities such as library, film viewing, and art. Once again, these teachers are flexible in their willingness to exchange individual children between homerooms when meeting student needs.

The primary noncategorical teachers are also a part of general education Team B (grades 2 and 3). A representative of the primary team participates in Team B meetings when general school issues are being decided. Meetings with a general education teacher to discuss a particular student regarding mainstreaming are arranged on an individual basis. (See "Mainstreaming".)

TEAMING AMONG RESOURCE PERSONNEL

The resource personnel serving the NECP are the full- and part-time therapists who have the project site as their base school, the itinerant teachers and therapists serving children at the school, the program development personnel, and the resource aide. Due to the large number of resource personnel involved in the project and the importance of an effective communication system among resource people, a resource team was established during the first year of the project. The learning disabilities resource teacher was selected as team leader.

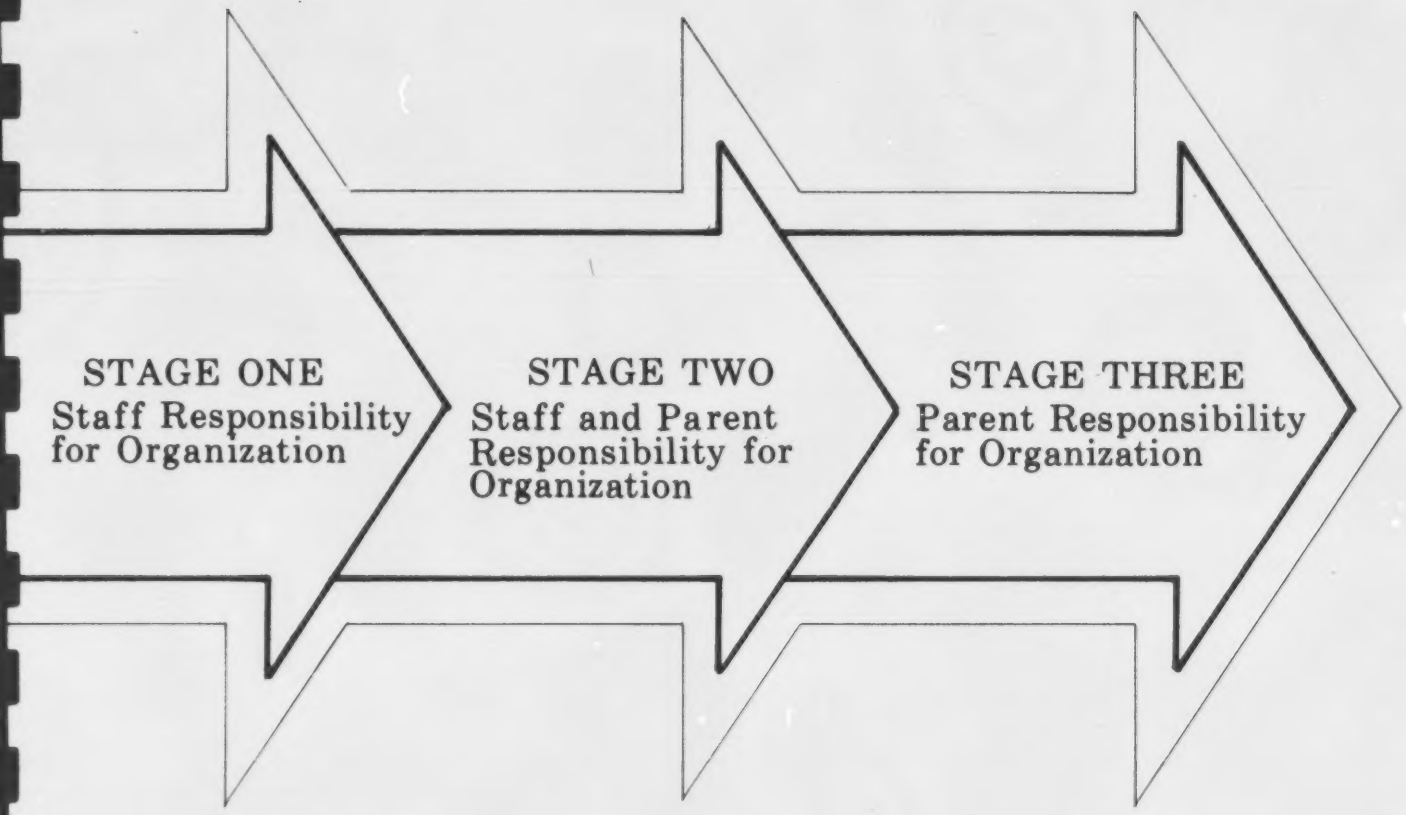
The resource team holds weekly meetings, communicating programwide and schoolwide information. The team also has a staff development program in which individual therapists explain their services to other members.

In addition to weekly team meetings, the therapists meet with one another to discuss programming for individual children. They participate in conferences about the progress of children on the primary and preschool teams and consult individually with teachers. The resource team provides the therapists with a home base for sharing ideas and problems. In addition, team meetings allow a coordinated schedule of services to children receiving more than one resource.

Teaming also gives the resource personnel an identity group and provides a support system.

PARENT PROGRAM

PARENT PROGRAM



PARENT PROGRAM

"To facilitate parents' ability to stimulate appropriate child development and support progress in their child's academic achievement and to act as effective child advocates."

In recognition of the common roles, responsibilities and concerns of parents of handicapped children, the above statement was the goal of the NECP parent program. Parent needs were further defined i the areas of skill development, information, emotional support, and child advocacy skills.

To meet the needs of parents of a child in a noncategorical program, the parent program should recognize:

- that the educational program serves children with a variety of handicapping conditions and ages;
- that there is a developmental hierarchy of needs of parents of handicapped children;
- that there is the need for a multifaceted approach in order to serve the emotional, informational, skill building, and advocacy needs of parents.

Planning based on these factors should provide parents with a dynamic process from which they gain support, empathy, information, and skills.

Mainstreaming was an important element in planning the NECP parent program. The success of a mainstreaming program depends on the support of the general and special education populations. Both must maintain a system of communication and a sensitivity to their mutual concerns as parents of young children.

The parent program component developed in three stages. Each stage reflected the increasing responsibilities assumed by parents for the parent program component and the changing needs and interests of the parent population.

During the first stage of the parent program, emphasis was placed on orientation to the NECP, integration of parents of the general and special education populations, and the assessment of each population. The

responsibility for the activities of parent services was chiefly that of the parent program committee composed of staff.

During the first year of the program, it was evident that while group meetings were desired, the needs and interests of the parents of general education and special education children differed. In order to address these needs:

- general and special education parents reorganized into separate groups regardless of the age of their children;
- general education parents continued a weekly open discussion format;
- parents of special education children chose a flexible format to include open discussions, topical presentations by professionals, and structured behavior management training sessions.

Evening meetings addressed topical subjects and were open to all parents.

During the second stage of the parent program a parent committee composed of staff and interested parents was formed. This committee was significant in that it marked the start of services planned and organized by parents. Day and evening meetings were structured in a manner similar to that of the previous year; the topics presented were chosen from a parent survey. In addition, a behavior management workshop series was provided once a week for four weeks. Information and skill building were also addressed in afternoon workshops presented by the primary level teachers. Parents of general and special education students were invited to attend. Similar skill building and information needs were met by the preschool staff through regular home visits.

As parents became more active, a small number of workgroups were formed within the organization, more services began to be initiated, and the parents took over some of the planning and publicity responsibilities formerly handled by staff. For example, an informal survey was designed and distributed by the program committee in order to obtain information for the planning of future eveining programs, and all evening programs were evaluated by the parents. Also, parent input was used in finalizing observation guidelines for the program.

The third stage of the parent program component increased the amount of parent involvement and leadership in all aspects of the parent program component and significantly decreased staff leadership and involvement.

An effective, dynamic NECP parent program evolved from total staff planning and initiation to increased parent independence for planning and implementation. Staff members eventually became consultants and/or workshop participants as requested.

The major premises of a parent program are as follows:

- The meetings and workshops are responsive to the interests of the parents.
- Parents are interested in assuming responsibility for developing and planning services.
- Parents want to acquire skill-building technique and information.
- A continuous relationship between a special education parent organization and the regular education parent organization is maintained.

Volunteers

Volunteers were an essential component of the NECP parent program. The program psychologist and preschool home resource teacher were responsible for organizing the parent program and the volunteer program.

A questionnaire assessing parent program needs was sent out in the fall of 1977 to both general and special education parents. Included was a section surveying their willingness to become volunteers and their preferences as to the type of work they would like to do.

Teachers who wanted volunteer services informed the home resource teacher of their needs. The home resource teacher was then responsible for assigning volunteers to classroom teachers. Once the home resource teacher had called a volunteer and received a commitment as to type of work and available time, the teacher informed the classroom teacher of the name and schedule for the volunteer.

The time volunteered for work in the classroom varied from one hour per week to a full day per week. Teachers urged volunteers to be consistent in their attendance so they could include them when planning the classroom activities. Some of the tasks they accomplished included:

- planning or decorating bulletin boards,
- preparing instructional materials,
- helping with clerical work, dittos, etc.,
- assisting by tutoring individual children or helping in small groups.

It became impossible for the home resource teacher to sufficiently supervise the volunteer program, and in the fall of 1978 a volunteer coordinator was recruited. The volunteer coordinator served as a direct contact person between parents and teachers. Her office acted as a "clearing house" for work assignments, material designs, teacher requests, and information dissemination. The coordinator also participated in the drafting of a volunteer handbook.

One of the program development teachers was also assigned to assist in volunteer activities. Together, the volunteer coordinator and program development teacher established specific yearly objectives and strategies for the volunteer program.

During the year, meetings and material development activities were conducted. Speakers presented information about sources of volunteers in the community and volunteer training programs. Evening sessions were held for interested parents and siblings of students to make needed classroom materials requested by teachers.

The volunteer program included students from organizations such as the elementary Future Teachers of America, the school safety patrol, and a high school service club. The interaction between student volunteers and the program students was considered positive for all concerned.

The goals and functions of the preschool parent volunteer program differed from those of the normal volunteer program. Historically, the preschool parents have been an integrated part of the class-based program. The parents of the preschool handicapped students volunteered their services on a regular basis ranging from one to four days a week. The parents attended workshops explaining behavior management, the preschool program, volunteer guidelines, positioning and handling the physically handicapped child, and other related skills. The workshops trained them for work in the classroom and assisted them in working with their children at home. The preschool volunteer program has evolved as a strong instructional, informational, and supportive entity of the program.

The volunteer services enriched the program, allowed teachers time to expand the program, and enabled students to receive more individual attention. Appreciation for the volunteers' role in school was important. One of the activities conducted for the volunteers was a luncheon held at the end of the school year. Parent volunteers received certificates of recognition, and student volunteers received special recognition and certificates for free ice cream.

The cohesiveness of the volunteer program was made possible through the efforts of the volunteer coordinator. This position was found to be the most essential component for the continuance of an active and successful volunteer program.

Topics for Parent Meetings

*Behavior Management Training

Classroom Observation and Participation (see "Volunteers")

Public Law 94-142 and Parent Advocacy

*Selecting Appropriate Toys for Your Child

Mainstreaming in the NECP

Planning for the Future (Lawyer and Insurance Representative)

*Reading Skills

Math Skills

Assessment Tools in the Primary Program

*Fairfax County Special Education Programs

*The Handicapped Child in the Family

Psychological Testing

Occupational and Physical Therapy

Social-Emotional Development of Children

Grades, Garfield, and Your Child

Language Development of Children

Cognitive Development of Children

*Highly attended and/or highly rated.

Areas of Parent Involvement

Monthly Evening Meetings

Weekly Day Meetings

Cognitive Workshops

Information Packets

Parent Library

Newsletter

Parent Roster

Listing of Area Doctors and Dentists Working with Handicapped Children

Carnival Booth

Pot Luck Picnic and Suppers

Volunteer Program (see "Volunteer" section)

Classroom Observation and Participation

Home Visits

Home Programs

Phone and Notebook Contacts

IEP Involvement and Development

Daily Behavior Checklist

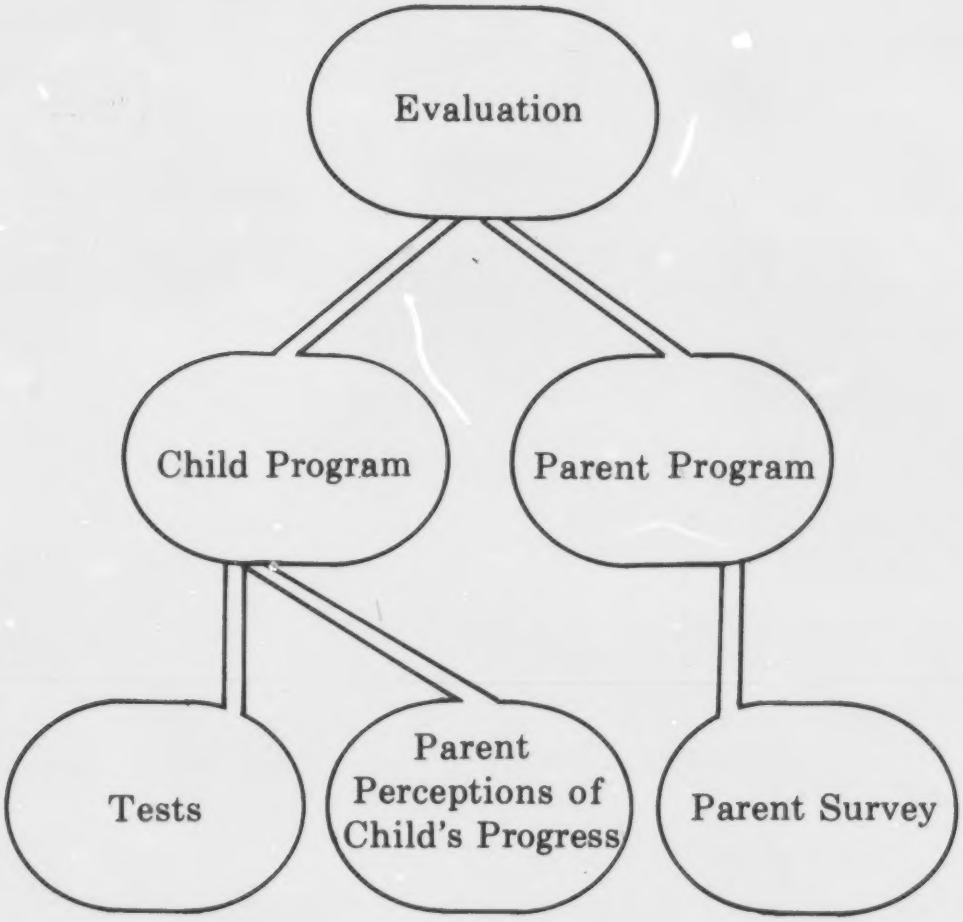
Language Notebooks

Parent-Staff Conferences

Flyers for Publicity

Flyers to Describe Weekly Class Plans

EVALUATION


Evaluation
Child Program
Parent Program
Tests
Parent Perceptions of Child's Progress
Parent Survey

EVALUATION

Evaluation was an integral part of the Noncategorical Early Childhood Program from its inception. The four major characteristics of the NECP model, noncategorical grouping, teaming, mainstreaming, and parent services, interacted with one another to provide the most appropriate educational experiences for each student's needs. For the purposes of evaluation, the NECP program must be viewed as a total package. It is impossible to sort out the impact of one aspect of the program, such as mainstreaming. Rather, it is assumed that services were delivered and changes in programming were made to provide the best educational program for each child.

Educational Philosophy

There are two components to the educational philosophy of the NECP model: developmental sequencing of skills and a diagnostic-prescriptive approach to instruction. A basic assumption of the NECP model is that, during the early childhood period (specifically, two to eight years of age), learning is dominated by the acquisition of developmental competencies. These competencies follow a fairly predictable sequence and are clustered in relatively independent domains: self-care, language, fine-motor, gross-motor, social, and cognitive skills. The purpose of the program is to move each student forward on the developmental continuum.

NECP has adopted a diagnostic-prescriptive approach to the instructional program. Initial and ongoing assessments are done by the teachers to identify the students' current level of functioning in each developmental domain. Instruction is planned to help the student acquire the next set of skills on the developmental continuum in each domain. In the cognitive area, once the student has demonstrated readiness, the focus shifts to the curricular sequences in reading and math. Instruction is planned according to skill development in each subject area.

Population Served by NECP

The NECP preschool component served all handicapped children who were between the ages of two and four on January 1 of the school year. The recommended guideline for determining eligibility of preschoolers for special

education is a delay of one standard deviation below the mean in at least one developmental domain or one-half standard deviation below the mean in two or more domains. Eligibility committees take into account a variety of quantitative and qualitative information in determining placement.

The primary level NECP program serves handicapped students who were five to eight years old on January 1 of the school year in question and who were found to need self-contained class placement.

In selecting students, the program focused on creating a group which represented a variety of handicapping conditions across a range of severity levels. Other factors taken into account in selecting some of the students were: multiple handicaps which made categorical placement difficult, potential for mainstreaming, and residence in the program's base school. Students had to meet the criteria for one or more of the categorical programs to be enrolled in NECP.

The preschool level served twenty-seven students the first year and thirty-five the second. Child progress data were available on seventeen of the first year students (73 percent) and thirty of the second year students (86 percent). The main reason for lack of data was that students entered after pretest data were collected or left before posttest data were collected. On the primary level, child progress data were available on twenty of the twenty-four first year students (83 percent) and thirty of the thirty-six second year students (83 percent). Moving in and out of the program was again the reason for loss of subjects.

Methods of Evaluation

The NECP program was evaluated in two ways. The most direct approach was through assessment of child progress in gaining developmental skills. In addition, the parents of students in the second year of the program were asked their perceptions of the program and its impact.

Evaluation of Child Progress

In order to evaluate student progress, one must have a standard against which to compare the groups' actual progress. Suppose the students averaged six months' gain in self-help skills during the seven months between pretest and posttest. Is this gain more or less than you would expect had the students stayed at home with no special intervention during this time period?

With a noncategorical group, how do you know how much progress to expect? One student may be working on refinement of table manners while another is learning to use a spoon without spilling. The standard used for NECP students was a statistically calculated expected gain score. This expected score estimated the child's rate of progress had he or she not had intervention.

By the standard test measurements used, both preschoolers and primary students made substantial gains in the NECP program. First- and second-year preschoolers and first-year primary students were evaluated using the Alpern-Boll Developmental Profile, which measures physical, self-help, social, academic, and communication skills (Tables 1 and 2). Preschool students made greater than expected gains in all domains during both the first and second years with the exception of physical development during the first year. Significantly greater than expected gains were made in self-help in year two. Social and academic gains were the areas of most progress for both years.

For the primary group, year one, Alpern-Boll scores exceeded expectation in all areas (Table 2). Primary-level students, year two, were assessed using the McCarthy Scales of Mental Abilities, which measures verbal, perceptual-performance, cognitive, motor, and memory skills, and Preschool Social Competency Scale (Table 3). Actual gains exceeded expected gains in all but quantitative skills. The difference was statistically significant for the Verbal Scale.

The McCarthy Scale scores were subjected to regression analysis with the independent variables being pretest rate of development, attendance, sex of student, and academic mainstreaming. Significant sex differences were found on the Verbal Scale, Perceptual-Performance Scale, and General Cognitive Index, with boys outperforming girls. For both the Quantitative and Motor Scales, pretest rate of development had a significant negative relationship with gains in the program. After adjusting for statistical bias, these results suggest that lower functioning students made greater gains in these areas than did higher functioning students. For the quantitative scale, this relationship was mediated by academic mainstreaming. That is, higher-functioning mainstreamed students made better progress than higher-functioning nonmainstreamed students.

Social development and classroom behaviors were assessed on the Preschool Social Competency Scale. Students made significantly greater than expected gains on this measure.

Parent Perceptions of Childrens' Progress

A parent's perceptions of his or her child's progress was an important consideration in evaluating the NECP program. In the spring of the second year of the program, a comprehensive survey was distributed to all parents of NECP students. The response rate was 92 percent.

In general, parents were quite pleased with the NECP model. Ninety percent agreed with the statement that the NECP was an excellent program. Only 16 percent of the parents felt that their children would make more progress in a categorical program than in NECP, a noncategorical program.

Parents were asked to rate their children's progress in developmental areas and in behavior management as excellent, good, fair, or poor (Table 4). Three-fourths of the parents were pleased with their children's progress. Two-thirds were satisfied with progress in self-help and gross-motor skills. Slightly more than half were pleased with management of inappropriate behavior. Parents of primary and preschool class-based students were more satisfied than parents of preschool home-based students in management of behavior.

Over 80 percent of the parents were pleased with the educational program, including implementation of the educational program, quality of instruction, availability of teacher's time, materials, and activities (Table 5). They were slightly less but still predominantly satisfied with the physical facilities and the flexibility of the program in adjusting to their children's needs. Parents were less satisfied with the quality of specialists' services than they were with instructional services. Only half of the parents were pleased with the availability of specialists' time. It may well be that their relative dissatisfaction with specialists' services was because they wanted more of them.

When parental ratings of program process (services to children) are compared to ratings of outcome (child progress), an interesting pattern emerges. Positive ratings of the educational services were made by 80 percent or more of the parents while positive ratings of child progress were in the 60-80 percent range. Thus, parents were slightly more satisfied with the operation

of the program than with its impact on their children. This discrepancy may be interpreted to indicate that it is hard for parents of handicapped children to admit that their children are making as much progress as one could expect.

Selected items on the parent survey revealed parents' views of the process and impact of NECP's efforts to mainstream handicapped children with nonhandicapped (Table 6). With respect to process, less than half of the parents were pleased with opportunities for involvement with nonhandicapped children, and half were satisfied with opportunities to deal with reactions of other children. Consistent with these results, less than half felt that their children had gained in their enjoyment of involvement with nonhandicapped, and half thought their children were better able to communicate with nonhandicapped peers. More parents (62 percent) thought their children had come to feel a part of the school community.

Ratings by parents of primary-level students were compared to those of preschool, class-based students. (Home-based students were not included in this analysis.) Primary-level parents consistently were more pleased than preschool, class-based parents. The result occurred, no doubt, because the mainstreaming activities were focused on the primary level. The two groups of parents had similar high ratings in feeling a part of the school community. This result suggests that it was experiences other than mainstreaming which contributed to the children's feeling a part of the school community.

Summary of Evaluation Results

The students in NECP made substantive gains. Preschool and primary students, whose progress was measured by the Alpern-Boll, showed greater than expected progress in all skill areas. Primary students, year two, showed greater than expected progress in all skill areas measured on the McCarthy Scales except for quantitative skills.

The parents' perceptions of their childrens' progress was an important aspect of the evaluation of the program's effectiveness. Parents overwhelmingly felt that NECP was an excellent program and that their children had made more progress with a noncateogrical approach than they would have with a categorical one.

Parent Component

The NECP model provides a variety of opportunities for parents to become involved in their children's education. The range of parent-school

contacts included: individual conferences at school with teachers, administrators, and other staff who work with their children; contact by phone or notebooks carried to and from school by the student; group experiences such as sharing groups, work groups, and workshops; volunteering and observing in the classroom; meetings of parent advisory groups such as the PTO, the NECP Parent Council, and the NECP Advisory Council; and home visits by teachers.

The best evaluative data available on the NECP parent component was from the parent survey distributed in the spring of the second year of the program. The parent component was evaluated by asking parents to rate the activities in which they participated and how good a job the school is doing to help them acquire knowledge and skills. The predominant form of parent-school contact was, not surprisingly, through the teacher (Table 7). The IEP conference was attended by 92 percent of the parents while 83 percent had one or more additional teacher conferences. Most parents had between one and three teacher conferences. Most of the parents (80 percent) communicated with the teacher by means of phone or notebook. About half had visited the classroom to volunteer or observe (58 percent) or had received home visits (45 percent).

About half of the parents had participated in parent groups organized by the program. Parents seemed to prefer sharing groups (43 percent participated) to work groups or workshops (12 percent and 15 percent, respectively).

One-fourth of the parents were active on a PTO committee or the NECP Advisory Council. This level of participation suggests broad-based interest in contributing to planning school programs.

With respect to contact with staff members other than teachers, three-fourths of the parents had conferences with related services staff, and one-fourth had phone contacts with them. One-fourth of the parents had occasion to set up conferences with the administrator.

The parents rated all of these parent involvement activities quite positively. At least 80 percent of the parents were pleased with each of the activities, and, in most case, 90 to 100 percent were satisfied.

The purpose of these parent involvement activities was three-dimensional: to increase parent's knowledge, to improve their parenting skills, and to provide emotional support. Parents were asked to rate how well the program was doing in each of these dimensions (Table 8).

With respect to information about their children's educational program, parents felt well-informed. Over 80 percent thought the school did a good job of informing them about educational goals, short-term objectives, and educational progress.

Parents felt less satisfied with how well the school had informed them regarding other topics relevant to having a handicapped child. These topics are: child's handicap (65 percent were satisfied); parent rights under PL 94-142 (63 percent); and community resources (48 percent).

Parents' ratings of the school's effectiveness in improving their parenting/teaching skills varied according to subject. Highest ratings went to academic subjects: 80 percent for language, reading, and writing and 72 percent for math. Self-help, behavior management, and socio-emotional skills were rated in the 60 to 70 percent range.

The relationship between parents' perceptions of improving their skills in working with their children and their children's progress was examined. It was found that the more parents perceived themselves as being helped by the school to work with their children, the more they saw their children as progressing in these areas. Interestingly, the results were significant for the self-help, social-emotional, and behavior management areas and not significant for the academic/cognitive areas (Table 9). It can be inferred that parents felt that their influence was greatest in the areas of self-help and social/behavioral skills, while academic skills were promoted primarily in the classroom.

With respect to the provision of emotional support and sharing experiences, 73 percent of the parents saw the school as helpful. The few parents who attended more than six meetings rated the program as good to excellent in providing emotional support. However, an even larger group who had attended none or one sharing group rated the program equally as high. Clearly, some parents got their emotional support through the sharing group and others through other activities.

Summary of the Parent Component

The parent component of the NECP project was multifaceted, including contacts with teachers by conference, phone, notebook, classroom observation, and home visits, contacts with other staff, and NECP Advisory Council/PTO committee involvement. There was much variation in the extent to which

parents engaged in the different activities. Most parent-school contact was between parent and teacher. However, whatever the degree and level of participation, the vast majority of the parents felt that the NECP program provided much-needed emotional support as well as increased knowledge and skills in working with their handicapped children.

EVALUATION TABLES

Table 1

Expected and Actual Gains (in months)
for Preschool Samples Year 1 and Year 2

Scale	Year 1 (N=17) mean pretest score	mean actual gain	mean expected gain [a]	t- ratio	Year 2 (N=30) mean pretest score	mean actual gain	mean expected gain [a]	t-ratio
Age	47.65	7.35			43.43	7.87		
Alpern-Boll Developmental Profile								
Physical	42.47	3.41	6.48	(–1.05)	36.83	7.13	6.67	(0.26)
Self Help [b]	48.25	8.31	7.48	(0.28)	44.53	13.13	8.14	(2.73)*
Social	49.41	8.94	7.58	(0.47)	40.67	12.47	7.47	(1.81)
Academic	43.18	11.06	6.60	(1.95)	35.23	12.57	6.45	(4.06)*
Communi-cation	42.11	8.47	6.52	(1.04)	37.21	6.41	4.38	(0.98)

[a] $\text{Expected gain} = \left(\frac{\text{pretest score}}{\text{pretest age}} \times \text{posttest score} \right) - \text{pretest score}$

[b] For the self-help scale, one outlier was removed from the sample. For the adjusted sample (N=16) mean pretest age=47.18 and mean time in the program from pretest to posttest (actual age gain) =7.38

* Significant beyond the .01 level.

Table 2

Expected and Actual Gains for Primary Sample, Year One

	Mean Pretest Score	Mean Actual Gain	Mean Expected Gain [a]	t-Ratio
(N=20) Age	68.95	7.35		
Alpern-Boll Developmental Profile				
Physical [b]	51.58	6.10	5.26	.26
Self-Help	61.65	10.25	6.29	1.57
Social	56.30	9.50	5.69	1.04
Academic	50.00	12.30	5.10	2.86*
Communication	52.35	9.35	5.37	1.12

[a] Expected gain= $\left(\frac{\text{pretest score}}{\text{pretest age}} \times \text{posttest age}\right)$ -pretest score

[b] For the physical scale, one outlier was removed from the sample. For the adjusted sample (N=19), mean pretest age=68.47 and mean time in program between testings (actual age gain)=7.11.

* Significant beyond the .01 level.

TABLE 3
Expected and Actual Gains (in months) for Primary Sample, Year 2

	Mean Pretest Score	Mean Actual Gain	Mean Expected Gain [a]	t-Ratio
(N=29) Age	79.50	6.81	—	—
McCarthy Scales of Mental Abilities				
Verbal	59.14	8.00	4.32	2.52*
Perceptual Performance	58.63	6.78	5.28	1.08
Quantitive	54.27	4.32	4.93	−0.34
General Cognitive Index	54.60	6.54	4.78	1.83
Memory	54.47	4.87	4.51	0.22
Motor [b]	52.69	5.52	4.98	0.32

[a] Expected gain score $= \left(\frac{\text{pretest score}}{\text{pretest age}} \times \text{posttest age}\right) - \text{pretest score}$

[b] N=28. One student had significant motor impairments which prevented taking this subtest.

* Significant at the .05 level

TABLE 4

Parent Ratings of Child Progress

Domain	Excellent/Good Rating (percent)
Cognition	73%
Language	79
Self-help	68
Gross-motor	67
Fine-motor	75
Social-emotional	75
Behavior	58

TABLE 5

Parent Ratings of Services to Children

Item	Ratings (percent)		
	Excellent/Good	Fair/Poor	No Response/ No Opinion
Educational Services			
Carrying out child's educational plan	87%	5%	8%
Quality of instruction	91	2	7
Availability of teacher's time	85	5	10
Materials and equipment	82	3	15
Activities and methods	82	7	11
Physical facilities	74	9	17
Flexibilities in adjusting to child's needs	77	12	11
Related Services			
Quality of specialist services	78	10	12
Availability of specialists' time	49	37	14

TABLE 6
Parent Ratings of Mainstreaming

Item	Excellent/Good Ratings (percent)		
	Total Group	Primary	Preschool
Program Process			
Opportunity for involvement with nonhandicapped	40%	57%	22%
Opportunity to deal with reactions of other children	52	57	48
Program Impact			
Child's growth in:			
Feeling part of the school community	62	71	61
Enjoying involvement with nonhandicapped	42	61	22
Being able to communicate with other children	52	71	39

TABLE 7
Parent Participation in and Evaluation of Parent Component Activities

Activity	Participated One or More Times (as percent of respondents)	Ratings (percent of participants)	
		Excellent/Good	Fair/Poor
Teacher Contact			
IEP conference	92%	98%[a]	—
Conference with teacher	83	100	0
Phone or notebook	80	192	8
Volunteer or observe in classroom	58	100	0
Receive home visit	45	96	4
Parent Groups			
Sharing group	43	92	8
Work group	12	85	14
Workshops	15	100	0
Advisory/Planning			
PTO Committee or NECP Advisory Council	28	82	18
Staff Contact			
Conference with related service staff	72	95	4
Conference with administrator	22	100	0
Phone contact with staff	23	92	8

[a] Rating of IEP conference was based on response to yes/no question regarding conference's usefulness. Evaluation of other activities based on excellent/good rating.

TABLE 8

Effectiveness of Parent Involvement Activities

Topic	Ratings (percent)		
	Excellent/Good	Fair/Poor	No Response/ No Opinion
Providing Information About:			
Child's educational goals	88%	7%	5%
Child's short range objectives	90	5	5
Child's progress	80	9	11
Child's handicap	65	25	10
Community resources	48	33	19
Parent rights under P.L. 94-142	63	21	16
Improving Parent's Skills to Help Child with:			
Behavior	66	15	19
Social-emotional growth	62	20	18
Language development, reading and writing	80	12	8
Mathematics	72	8	10
Self-help	68	16	16
Helping Parents Cope Through:			
Supportive/sharing experiences	73	8	19

TABLE 9
Relationship Between Improved Skills of Parents and Child Progress in Skill Areas

Skill Domain	Chi-Square
Self-help	24.44*
Social-emotional	29.01*
Behavior management	23.81*
Cognitive thinking/intellectual development	5.47
Language development	11.41

* Significant at/or beyond the.05 level.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Additional information can be requested for the following areas:

- Evaluation Manual

  How to start a basic evaluation system for a program.

- Parent Program

  Goals and procedures for the parent program; samples of teaching activities for parents.

- Survey and Questionnaires

  Copies and results of parent and teacher surveys and questionnaires used by the program.

- Preschool Program of Studies (Assessment/Curriculum)

  Available after July 1980

Send requests to:

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